



Shelter

The Challenge

The U.N. and other aid agencies have characterized the January 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti as the largest urban disaster in modern history. The earthquake affected an estimated 3 million people, including 1.5 million people displaced to 1,300 settlement sites throughout Port-au-Prince.

One of the biggest challenges has been to provide shelter to those who lost their houses. The earthquake created more than 10 million cubic meters of debris, hindering reconstruction. The loss of critical records in the earthquake has made identifying the rightful owners of land extremely difficult, and this has exacerbated the problem of identifying land for housing.

Despite these challenges, in support of Government of Haiti (GOH) priorities, the international community has achieved numerous accomplishments in the shelter sector. Nearly two years after the earthquake, approximately 550,000 of the original 1.5 million people remain displaced in camps—or approximately 36 percent of those displaced. Repairing damaged houses and replacing completely destroyed houses will provide opportunities for both ownership and rentals for earthquake victims. The U.S. Government (USG), through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has been a key leader in the shelter sector response, both during the emergency response and in the longer-term reconstruction effort.

Emergency and Transitional Response

Emergency Shelter Provision, Transitional Shelter, and Repair Solutions: In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, USAID worked with the international community and with non-governmental organization partners to provide emergency shelter to 1.5 million displaced persons. Following the emergency phase, USAID provided shelter solutions—including transitional shelters (t-shelters), repairs to damaged houses, and support to host families housing people displaced after the earthquake—to more than 320,000 people. As of December 2011, USAID partners had reported the completion of over 28,600 t-shelters to house approximately 143,600 people, repairs to more than 6,000 “yellow” structures (safe following minor repairs) allowing more than 40,500 people to return home, and support to hosting situations befitting more than 136,000 people. USAID has provided approximately \$108 million for emergency shelter activities and provision of shelter solutions in Haiti.

Neighborhood-Based Resettlement Approach: USAID supports a neighborhood-based approach—involving extensive community participation and close coordination between and among the community members, GOH, donors, and implementing partners—to facilitate returns to areas of origin and help re-establish pre-earthquake social and economic structures. While this approach is more time consuming than simply constructing shelters, it serves as an opportunity to improve neighborhoods from their pre-earthquake conditions. For example, in the Ravine Pintade neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, USAID support encompasses rubble removal, “yellow” house repairs, and the construction of footpaths, drainage lines, retaining walls, and t-shelters, including innovative two-story t-shelters. Furthermore,

USAID has upgraded and repaired key public and community facilities, including community libraries, cultural centers, vocational training centers, public and private schools, solar street lighting, as well as secured scholarships for returning and resettled internally displaced students and young adults. The World Bank is also initiating a \$95 million neighborhood upgrading project—\$65 million of which is funded through the USG contribution to the Haiti Reconstruction Fund (HRF).

Another key area where USAID is working is in resettlement of inner-city camps. USAID is providing - housing options for camp residents in Place St. Pierre and Place Boyer, two prominent public parks in Port-au-Prince where internally displaced persons (IDPs) have lived in tents for nearly two years. Under priorities identified by the Martelly administration, USAID is working with the local municipality, GOH officials, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to resettle 1,237 families residing in these areas. After registering for the program, residents choose which resettlement option is best for their family: repair of their “yellow” house, demolition of a “red” house with the construction of a t-shelter, or a one-year rental assistance grant. By providing these shelter options, USAID is helping Haitians reclaim and rebuild their lives.

Reconstruction

Enumeration: An impediment to the returns process is land tenure, which was largely undocumented in official records prior to the earthquake. While the GOH develops more long-term solutions to land-tenure issues, USAID is supporting a participatory community enumeration process, which serves as a fast-track transitional measure to facilitate returns to neighborhoods and support reconstruction efforts. The enumeration process consists of speaking with IDPs to collect information regarding tenure and occupancy, which the community then validates to confirm its accuracy. As of October 2011, IOM had collected, recorded, and validated land tenure and occupancy status of more than 8,800 plots/buildings with USAID support. IOM and the GOH will now scale up this pilot methodology through a HRF project that will record tenure and occupancy information for every single household in the earthquake-affected zone.

The Final Phase—Core Housing: Replacing housing stock lost as a result of the earthquake and providing ownership opportunities for identified beneficiaries is the final phase of USG post-earthquake reconstruction and recovery support for housing. To meet this GOH priority, USAID aims to provide housing in new settlements near employment opportunities in the Port-au-Prince Development Corridor and in the Cap-Haitien Development Corridor near the Caracol Industrial Park. The housing, being developed in conjunction with development partners, provides alternative locations for earthquake victims and other eligible households looking for housing away from the congestion of Port-au-Prince. In total, these sites will host a combination of housing, sites and services, and/or housing finance for up to 15,000 households, or approximately 75,000 beneficiaries. These sites will also serve as “business incubators,” by providing enterprise opportunities that will serve the new residents. USAID began clearing land in preparation for development of the first site in mid-October 2011.

